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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 001761

SIPDIS

OCS/ACS/NESA FOR LEIGH RIEDER
OCS/CI FOR JOAN CRISTINI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CASC](#)

SUBJECT: W/W VISIT - AMINA CORDEIRO

REF: 04 JEDDAH 00431

1. (U) On June 6, 2005, Conoff and Senior ACS LES visited with thirteen year old Amina Cordeiro at the request of the left behind parent, Melissa Luna, who currently lives in Dubai. The visit took place at the house of Abdullah Al Johani, the prominent Jeddah lawyer who represents the Bin Laden family. Also in attendance were Derrick Cordeiro, Amina's father who currently resides in Saudi Arabia; Pat Cordeiro, Derrick's new wife; Isabel Bin Laden, Amina's grandmother (Derrick is her son); and Kathleen Al Johani, Abdullah's wife.

2. (U) Amina is a bright young girl with a distinct touch of mischief in her eyes. When she is not answering questions, her mind is secretly at work, her eyes scanning the audience and taking mental notes. At first, she was a bit reluctant in the presence of her family and friends to answer questions from a stranger. Yet when individual conversations started between members of the group, Amina began to speak more freely.

3. (U) Amina is just finishing the local equivalent of eighth grade. She is studying at the Continental School, which follows a British curriculum. It is exam time in Saudi Arabia, which is a stressful time for many students. Amina seemed calm and collected about the whole process, and seemed to be cruising towards the end of the school year. English is her favorite subject, and she predicted a high score in that exam, even though she had difficulty with some reading comprehension questions. When asked why she does not have a British accent, the collective wisdom of the group was that while her academic influences are British, at home she hears exclusively American accents. Amina is not a fan of geography. She complained that the test questions were very difficult, and that she had a hard time remembering which country was which.

4. (U) Like any typical eighth grader, Amina spends long hours on the phone with her friends. Her father provided her with her own cell phone as a Ramadan/birthday present, and now her stepmother claims that Amina is looking for it to be "surgically implanted". When asked what she talks about on the phone, the rest of the group began murmuring about an Egyptian boy at school, at which point Amina started to look at the floor. The subject was quickly changed.

5. (U) Amina has a cadre of four close friends that she hangs out with at school. Sleepovers are common on the weekends. Amina's father, rolling his eyes at the possibility of yet another pre-teen function at his house, says that he is very selective about whose house Amina is allowed to go to. He prefers that Amina host her friends rather than the other way around.

6. (U) When she is not on the phone or with her friends, Amina dabbles in sports. She took tennis lessons for a few months, and seems interested in resuming them. Ice skating is also a favorite pastime, although she is rather picky about which ice rink she goes to - the most popular rink in Jeddah is not her favorite, because the quality of the skates is not up to snuff. Horse riding lessons are scheduled for sometime in the future, but Amina is a bit anxious about them because she claims to be afraid of heights.

7. (U) That theory does not hold water, however, as Amina is a huge fan of roller coasters. She is a regular at Al Shallal amusement park, a popular place for the teen set in Jeddah. The secret, she says, is to sit in the middle of the car and look at the head of the person in front of you. That apparently prevents her from looking down in the middle of an upside down section of the ride (her favorite part). While she is no stranger to adrenaline-pumping roller coasters, it was ironically a rogue piece of pavement that caused Amina to fall and chip her front teeth recently. Luckily, the roots were not damaged and the dentist did a fantastic job of reconstructing her wonderful smile.

8. (U) Amina claims to be an adventurous eater, but like many kids her age she naturally gravitates towards fast

food. Pizza is her favorite dinner, yet she enjoys the occasional hamburger just for variety. Amina avoids spinach as a rule. Still, she diplomatically noted that "if it's cooked the right way" it can in fact be edible.

9. (U) Avril Lavigne is her current singer of choice, although she also likes an American singer called Mario. When asked about Arabic music, Amina scrunched her nose. She listens almost exclusively to American pop music. During long hours in front of the television (much to the dismay of her family), she still likes to watch cartoons. The Powerpuff Girls is her favorite show, and her father confessed to watching it with her more than once.

10. (SBU) Near the end of the visit, Amina and her stepmother stepped outside so Derrick and his mother could reiterate their concerns with Conoff. They maintain that their offer to fly Amina's mother to Saudi Arabia and take care of all her needs while visiting her daughter is still open, in spite of their lack of confidence in her. They also voiced concerns that Ms. Luna is not as proactive as she used to be in contacting Amina. She used to send boxes, letters, and emails that were very well received, but now that correspondence is infrequent.

11. (SBU) The family also addressed the Interpol hit placed on Derrick Cordeiro and his arrest in Lebanon. Since the arrest, Amina has voiced fears that either she or her father will be kidnapped. Amina's father said that the incident had a profound effect on his child, and caused this normally extroverted girl to become much more subdued. The family is also concerned that the Bin Laden name could be used as an excuse for further legal troubles outside of Saudi Arabia. For that reason, and because Ms. Luna plainly stated that it is her intent to take Amina to the United States, they are no longer open to meetings with Ms. Luna outside of Saudi Arabia.

ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY